

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 01003 280727Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1414

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 1003

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, GY

SUBJECT: SUGAR WORKERS TO RECIVE PAY INCREASE

REF: GEORGETOWN 0563

1. ON JUNE 25, HIGH COURT JUSTICE VICTOR CRANE, ARBITRATOR IN LABOR DISPUTE IN SUGAR INDUSTRY, ANNOUNCED AWARD OF (G) DOLS 16 MILLION WAGE INCREASE FOR GUYANA'S SUGAR WORKERS. CRANE AWARDED 20 PERCENT INCREASE FOR 1974 AND 10 PERCENT INCREASE FOR 1975, INCLUSIVE OF 5 PERCENT INTERIM INCREASE ALREADY AWARDED FOR EACH YEAR. MANPOWER CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (MPCA). SUGAR WORKERS UNION HAD ASKED FOR 30 PERCENT INCREASE FOR EACH YDAR WHILE GUYANA SUGAR PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION (GSPA) HAD OFFERED TEN PERCENT PER YEAR. JUSTICE CRANE ALSO DECIDED THAT SUGAR WORKERS WILL BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE GUARANTEED OUT-OF-CROP MINIMUM WAGE, AND HE SETTLED MINOR QUESTION OF MZ

T SALARY INCREASES. INDUSTRY SOURCE ESTIMATES OUT-

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PAGE 02 GEORGE 01003 280727Z

OF-CROP WAGE WILL ADD (G) DOLS 3.5 MILLION TO ANNUAL WAGE BILL.

CRANE HAS NOT YET REACHED DECISION ON ISSUES OF PROFIT SHARING, ALLOWANCES, AND PRODUCTION BONUSES. CRANE ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL WAS ESTABLISHED IN APRIL (REFTEL),

TO SETTLE 1974-75 CONTRACT DISPUTE BETWEEN MPCA AND GSPA AND TO PUT END TO 48-DAY STRIKE BY MPCA'S UNRECOGNIZED RIVAL, GUYANA AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION (GAWU).

2. EMERGING FROM FOUR-HOUR MEETING WITH UNION EXECUTIVE, MPCA GENERAL SECRETARY CLVELAND CHARRAN SAID MPCA WOULD MAKE NO PUBLIC COMMENT UNTIL CRANE HAD DECIDED ON REMAINING PARTS OF AWARD. PRIVATELY, CHARRAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT MPCA HAD BEEN QUOTE SCREWED UNQUOTE ON 10 PERCENT PAY INCREASE FOR 1975 AND ON QUALIFICATIONS FOR MAXIMUM OUT-OF-CROP BENEFITS. CHARRAN ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH 20 PERCENT INCREASE FOR 1974 AND WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPLE OF OUT-OF-CROP WAGE. CHARRAN SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW JUSTICE CRANE WAS INSTRUCTED BY GOVT TO KEEP DOWN SIZE OF AWARD. CHARRAN NOW HAS TASK OF SELLING AWARD TO WORKERS IN FACE OF INEVITABLE ATTACKS BY RIVAL GAWU, LABOR ARM OF OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY.

3. COMMENT: IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE ATTITUDE OF RANK AND FILE WORKERS UNTIL FALL HARVEST BEGINS, PROBABLY IN LATE JULY. WHILE OBJECTIVELY ARBITRATOR'S AWARD OF MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OVER TWO YEARS IS GREATER INCREASE THAN SUGAR WORKERS HAVE RECEIVED OVER PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS (1969-73), WORKERS EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGH AND CRANE'S AWARD IS UNLIKELY TO GUARANTEE INDUSTRIAL PEACE THIS FALL.
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